conceptions of the future life and ritual for the dead. In this development Buddhism and Taoism had a very large share. Popular superstition and animism made extensive contributions. Yet it is probably due more to Confucianism than to any other one factor that the cult of the dead has loomed so large in China. Certainly it is to Confucianism that it has owed a large proportion of its ceremonies and characteristic concepts. Many of the rites for death, mourning, and burial, for instance, have been taken from the ancient writings which Confucianism regards as its Classics and which it had no small share in creating and preserving.

No other phase of Chinese religious life has been more prominent than the ceremonies for the departed. They constitute, indeed, one of the outstanding characteristics of Chinese culture and have been an integral part of that most potent of Chinese social institutions, the family. No attempt to understand the Chinese can be anything but imperfect without at least a brief description of them.

In a country so large as China variations in practices and beliefs associated with the dead are inevitable and even a general description runs the risk of being partially untrue for a particular community or may be such a combination of what has existed in several different localities that it will not give an exact picture of what takes place in any one of them.

In general, the dead have been supposed to be dependent upon the living for their weal or woe. Ceremonies in honor of ancestors, moreover, have had a decided utility in helping to tie together the family and the clan. Their maintenance, therefore, has de-

pended upon a mixture of motives—respect and affection for the departed, fear, the desire for the prosperity of the living, and social usefulness. There have entered, too, the binding influence of custom and the desire so to conduct the ceremonies as to win the good opinion—or perhaps the envy—of one's neighbors. In the hearts of some, respect and affection for the dead have doubtless been the predominant or even the only motive. Possibly a larger number have kept up the ceremonies simply from the desire to conform to the customs of civilized society and have had no confidence that through them good would accrue to the dead or that the dead would be able to bless or injure the living. Prob-